

Promoting permanency for kids Statewide TPR Initiatives

The Maryland Judiciary confirmed its support of Maryland's most vulnerable citizens by adopting a number of initiatives which will benefit children involved in DSS-related termination of parental rights cases. The Judiciary's TPR Workgroup, comprised of representatives from the court, DSS, attorneys and other child advocates, proposed and were successful in obtaining State funding for several positions and programs that will permit courts to more efficiently process TPR cases. These new initiatives are designed to improve identification and service of parents, expand the use of ADR techniques, explore the use of post-adoption contact, educate judges in case manage-

ment, improve case management, and enhance automation support. As stated in the Plan of Action that was submitted to the General Assembly in August 2001, the effectiveness and success of the Plan in ensuring that the best interests of children are served in all CINA and TPR cases depends upon the effectiveness of the partnerships among the Judiciary, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and other child welfare stakeholders, as well as a reliable funding source for all stakeholders.

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Of courts and coconuts

Marylanders Attend AFCC Conference

The State of Maryland was well represented at the 39th Annual Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Conference held at the Hilton Waikoloa Village on the Big Island of Hawaii June 5-8, 2002. The theme of this year's conference was "Looking Over the Rim: New Horizons for Families, Courts and Communities." Participants were present

administrators, family support service coordinators, custody evaluators and therapists.

Among the many presenters was the Honorable Philip T. Caroom of Anne Arundel County who ably led a panel entitled "Helping Pro Se Litigants Help Themselves" and presented a view from the bench, focusing on the benefits of a "user friendly" approach when hearing cases involving at least one pro se litigant. MLAN's own Ayn Crawley did a super job helping those assembled understand the dynamics of the ever-increasing pro se population in



photo by Harry Jordan

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from Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince Georges County and Talbot County. They included judges, masters,

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Lift Every Voice



Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, Executive Director

Every voice is important to the choir. Some of my colleagues know that I performed with a band for about 10 years doing original

acoustic music. What began as a five-piece ensemble dwindled over the years to four and finally three voices. While I enjoyed the music we made throughout that period, nothing could quite match the fullness of those five voices rising together. Every voice had its place and brought something that enriched the work we did together.

Several recent developments within the Department of Family Administration have reminded me that what makes a good team is the willingness of each individual to add his or her voice to the mix. Our department recently developed goals and objectives as a part of a larger “improvement process” undertaken by the Administrative Office of the Courts. I have outlined those so that those of you who work with us will know our self-imposed objectives. We welcome your comments and insights and hope you will work with us to meet those goals, and hold us accountable.

While the results of our efforts were positive, even more heartening was the process by which we were able to develop those goals. Every department employee participated in the planning process. We made a commitment to ensure that everyone had a voice and that every voice was heard. Risks were taken, concerns were expressed and assumptions shattered. As a result we have improved our ability to communicate with one another and developed a team decision-making process that now informs much of what we do—from grant administration, to hiring, to writing this newsletter. We continue to learn from and challenge one another.

One voice that will be missed is that of Debra Bright's. Debra left the Department of Family Administration to pursue a not-to-be-missed opportunity.

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See page 3 for more details. Her absence reminds us that every voice is important to the whole. We wish her well while we look forward to that new, as yet unknown voice we can add to the choir.

Department of Family Administration Goals

For a complete list of the goals, objectives, target outcomes and measures of success developed by the Department of Family Administration, see www.courts.state.md.us/family/.

- Goal 1 Enhance the court's response to families and children through the coordination and professionalization of the court and its service providers.
- Goal 2 Improve the effectiveness of and confidence in the family law system through enhanced communication within the Department of Family Administration and with internal and external customers.
- Goal 3 Strengthen the work environment by respecting individual needs and promoting healthy interaction between co-workers.
- Goal 4 Serve as a change agent for the Judiciary by improving service to families and children through facilitation and implementation of innovative family law policies and programs.

www.courts.state.md.us/family

St. Mary's continues an exemplary tradition

24th Annual Child Welfare Day Highlights Sexual Abuse

Continuing a long-standing commitment to children, the St. Mary's County Circuit Court and their colleagues in the local child protection community hosted the 24th Annual Child Welfare Day on May 16. Originally the idea of circuit court Judge Marvin Kaminetz, the event brings together judges, masters, social workers, therapists, and other professionals serving families in St. Mary's County for a day of seminars and discussion to focus on the needs of children.

This year's event, entitled *From Forensics to Our Future in St. Mary's County*, focused primarily on issues of child sexual abuse. Captain Barbara Craig, MC, USN gave the keynote address. As a physician and Director of the Armed Forces Center for Child Protection at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center, Captain Craig operates a center that specializes in diagnosing and evaluating child abuse and child sexual abuse for the Armed Forces. She focused on

when a medical evaluation is appropriate in child sexual abuse cases, what to expect from a medical evaluation, and how to ensure that the evaluation has been properly conducted. She spoke in detail about how evaluators conduct an assessment and reach a diagnosis.

Other speakers included Nikki Wooten, also of the Armed Forces Center for Child Protection, who spoke on conducting a child forensic interview, Russ Funk of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault who spoke on working with child victims, and a speaker from the Shriver Center at UMBC.



Mediation Training Dates

The Department of Family Administration will again be offering the 40-hour basic mediation course and the 20-hour child access mediation course over the next year. Both courses will be offered to judges, masters and court professionals. Registration will be provided. The dates for the courses are provided below to assist you in clearing your docket and planning your calendar. Additional details will be provided at a later time. Both courses will be held at the Judiciary Training Center in Annapolis.

40-hour Basic Mediation Course

January 6 through 10, 2003

20-hour Domestic Mediation Course

February 4 through 6, 2003

Farewell to Debra Bright

The Department of Family Administration bid farewell to Debra Bright on June 28. Ms. Bright left to accept a position as Statewide Planning Coordinator for Family Violence. Ms. Bright will bring a wealth of expertise on domestic violence to the new position. In that position she will report directly to the co-chairs of the Lieutenant Governor's and Attorney General's Family Violence Council and will be tasked with developing a long-range strategic plan for Maryland to prevent and respond to family violence.

Ms. Bright served the Department of Family Administration as a Family Services Administrator specializing in domestic violence issues. As such she has worked extensively with our Special Project Grantees and staffed the Domestic Violence Subcommittee of the Committee on Family Law. We wish Debra the best of luck in her new position and look forward to opportunities to work together in the future on these critical issues.

Baltimore City Juvenile Court Launches On-site Paternity Testing

In an effort to break through a major barrier to meeting the statutory time frame for processing DSS-related TPR cases, the juvenile court in Baltimore City established an on-site paternity lab. This lab, run by Biotechnologies, Inc., of Richmond, Va., became operational July 9, 2002. As a result of an initiative of the Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), state funds have been provided to the AOC to assist in the identification of fathers early in the CINA process.

Identification of the father early in the process will enable the court to consider reunification services with the father or with paternal relatives, which may result in fewer TPR filings. Baltimore City was identified as a jurisdiction where this presents a particular challenge and therefore resources to enhance the system were appropriated. "We are excited about having an additional tool to further simplify CINA and TPR trials with multiple fathers," noted Judge Martin P. Welch. "Being able to determine paternity prior to trial will greatly improve the juvenile court's efficiency."

Congratulations to members of the TPR Workgroup who spearheaded this effort. Special recognition goes to the child welfare stakeholders in Baltimore City: Judge Welch, Judge David W. Young, Joan Little, Esq., Beverly Schulerbrandt, Esq., Yolanda Tanner, Esq., and Dale Hendrick, who have been planning and organizing the launching of the on-site paternity lab. The lab is open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. in the Clarence Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse. For more information regarding the paternity lab, please contact Judge Martin P. Welch at (410) 396-5082 or Althea R. Stewart Jones at (410) 260-1296.



Stakeholders and TPR Work Group members at the inauguration of the Baltimore City On-site Paternity Testing Lab. (Left to right): Joan Little, Legal Aid Bureau; Hon. Martin P. Welch; Dale Hendricks, Juvenile Court Administrator; Beverly Schulerbrandt, OPD; Yolanda Tanner, Dept. of Social Services; and Master James Casey.

Photo by Will Howard

New family faces

New Coordinator for Charles County

Ann W. McFadden has recently joined the Circuit Court for Charles County as their Family Support Services Director. Ann brings experience working with families in a variety of settings. In addition to employment as a legal assistant, she has also worked with youth, the developmentally disabled and those suffering from mental illness. Ann was most recently the Program Director of Eastern Point

Shelter in Annapolis, a 60-day shelter for boys ages 8 to 14 in the foster care system. She also served as Program Director for Southern Maryland Community Network's Psychosocial Services and as Resource Developer for their Community Support Services. Her Bachelor's of Science degree in Social Work from East Tennessee State University has certainly come in handy. Ann is married and has a 23-year-old son. Welcome aboard Ann!

TPR, cont. from p. 1

Permanency Planning Liaison Positions

One of the major initiatives to be undertaken is the creation of a permanency planning liaison for each judicial circuit. Each judicial circuit has received funding to permit the hiring of a permanency planning liaison beginning October 2002. Circuit administrative judges will be responsible for overseeing the hiring and implementation of these positions.

The TPR Workgroup anticipates that the permanency planning liaisons will assist the juvenile courts in supporting the implementation and administration of the TPR Workgroup recommendations and priorities by monitoring the foster care cases and defining systemic issues to be addressed by the family division. Monitoring whether statutory time frames are met and appropriate services are available throughout the CINA case should be a top priority as well.

TPR Court Coordinator

Another position that will assist in the processing of TPR cases is that of a statewide TPR Court Coordinator. The person hired in this position will become a part of the FCCIP staff at the Administrative Office of the Courts. The TPR Court Coordinator will take over the staffing of the TPR Workgroup and work closely with the permanency planning liaisons. That person's primary duties will be to assist the TPR Workgroup in implementing the Plan of Action that

was submitted to the General Assembly, and review and facilitate the model practices in juvenile courts around the country, including the programs encouraged and/or established by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. The TPR Court Coordinator will also pursue additional funding for court reform in the foster care system.

On-site Paternity Testing

One of the initial findings of the TPR Workgroup was that identifying parents, especially fathers, early in the CINA process, is a major barrier for some local jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions are not making efforts to establish paternity until late in the process. The Circuit Court for Baltimore City received funds in Fiscal Year 2002 for on-site paternity testing in CINA and TPR cases. (See article on previous page.) Baltimore City and Baltimore County will be the recipients of Fiscal Year 2003 paternity testing funding. The TPR Workgroup, with its new chair, the Honorable Martin P. Welch, will be working to implement the initiatives detailed above. Stay tuned for updates on how these initiatives are progressing.



Events Elsewhere

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|---|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Association of Family and Conciliation Courts 5th International Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations November 7-9, 2002 | Westward Look Resort, Tucson, AZ | 608-664-3750 |
| Association of Family and Conciliation Courts 5th International Congress on Parent Education & Access Programs November 10-12, 2002 | Westward Look Resort, Tucson, AZ | 608-664-3750 |
| Association of Family and Conciliation Courts 40th Annual Conference May 28-31, 2003 | Canada | 608-664-3750 |



The session in review

A Brief Summary of Family Law Bills that Became Law

The following is a brief summary of family law bills (with effective dates) that were passed by the General Assembly and became law at the conclusion of the 2002 Legislative Session. This list is not exhaustive. You can obtain more detailed information about each bill, and obtain a copy of the text of the bill from <http://mlis.state.md.us/#bill>.

Adoption Bills

HB 396 Family Law – Adoption – Recognition of Foreign Adoption Decrees

October 1, 2002

Requires foreign adoptions to be recognized in Maryland if adopting parent is Maryland resident and foreign adoption verified by granting of an IR-3 visa for the child. Eliminates need for re-adoption and eliminates requirement for natural parents' consent if adoptive parent does choose to obtain a U.S. adoption in Maryland in these cases.

Child Support Bills

HB 683 Child Support – Financial Institutions – Garnishment of Accounts

October 1, 2002

Requires financial institutions to furnish CSEA with a report on accounts of child support obligors. Permits CSEA to attach accounts of obligors whose arrearages are greater than \$500, and who have made no payments in 60 days.

SB 657 Family Law – Child Support Age of Majority

October 1, 2002

Provides children are entitled to child support until age 19 if still enrolled in secondary school. The change in statute constitutes a material change in circumstances for purposes of modifying child support orders issued prior to October 1, 2002.

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HB 1192 Health Insurance – Coverage Under Medical Support Notices

July 1, 2002

Allows a child support agency to issue a Medical Support Notice in a child support case where court has ordered parent to include child in health insurance coverage. Requires action of employers and insurance companies upon receipt of Medical Support Notice.

CINA / TPR Bills

SB 394 Juvenile Causes – CINA – Hearings and Guardianships

October 1, 2002

Sponsored by Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP). Provides technical and clarifying amendments to the CINA statute.



HB 968 Juvenile Causes – CINA Termination of Permanency Plan Review

October 1, 2002

Sponsored by FCCIP. Unless court finds good cause, CINA case must be terminated after the court grants custody and guardianship to a relative or other individual. If court finds good cause not to terminate the case, court must conduct review hearing every 12 months. Bill was proposed on grounds that continuing CINA case when custody and guardianship is granted to a relative is not required by federal law and places unreasonable burden on families and the court.

SB 3 Maryland Safe Haven

October 1, 2002

Provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for person who leaves unharmed newborn with responsible adult





within 3 days after birth. Outlines responsibilities of persons accepting the newborn and provides immunity for certain persons, hospitals, etc.

SB 495 Drug-addicted Babies – Modifications

October 1, 2002

Modifies existing law by creating presumption that child is CINA if born exposed to certain drugs and mother either refuses recommended level of treatment or does not successfully complete treatment.

HB 827 Higher Education – Waiver of Tuition Fees- Clarifying Foster Care Recipients

July 1, 2002

Proposed by DHR. Alters foster care recipients' eligibility for waiver of tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education. Applicants must reside in foster care at time of high school graduation or GED to receive waivers. Also clarifies waivers available only to those placed in foster care by DHR.

Delinquency Bills

SB 428 Juvenile Law – Transfer of Cases to Juvenile Court

October 1, 2002

Specifies that a court exercising criminal jurisdiction in case involving a child may transfer case to juvenile court before trial or before a specific plea is entered. Requires court to make a determination at sentencing as to whether to transfer the case to the juvenile court under specified conditions.

HB 962 Juvenile Causes – Treatment Services Plans

October 1, 2002

If a treatment service plan is not implemented by DJJ within 25 days after disposition, court shall schedule, within 7 days after receipt of the certification, a disposi-

tion review hearing to be held within 30 days after receipt of certification.

HB 1011 Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center – Intake – Assessment – Detention

July 1, 2002

Requires DJJ to operate and manage the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center as a centralized regional juvenile intake, assessment, court and detention facility for Baltimore City.

HB 1081 Juvenile Justice – Community Detention

October 10, 2002

Requires DJJ to establish community detention for juveniles under certain conditions; requires DJJ to adopt regulations to implement the program. [Note: The Juvenile Law Subcommittee will develop a standardized community detention order to be used by all jurisdictions.]

Domestic Violence Bills

HB 6 District Court Commissioners – Powers and Duties

To be on ballot in November.

HB 663 Interim Domestic Violence Orders and Interim Peace Orders – Issuance by District Court Commissioners.

Contingent on ratification of HB 6 by the voters.

These two bills together will permit individuals to seek protection through peace orders, ex partes and civil protective orders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During hours when the District Court is not open, petitioners will be able seek limited protection through a District Court commissioner. To take effect, the constitutional amendment (HB6) must be ratified by the voters in the November election.



Other Family Law Bills

HB 106 Family Law – Marriage Ceremonies – Judges

June 1, 2002

Permits judges to perform marriage ceremonies

Guess What's Happening in Somerset County?



- A panel of representatives from the Maryland State Police, Somerset County Health Department, Somerset County Sheriff's Department and the Family Services Coordinator make presentations to the county middle and high schools to discuss the negative affects that tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse have on the family and community. The program will continue during the following school year.
- Family Services will be coordinating time, talent and resources with Core Service Agency to improve the existing Somerset County Resource Book which will be distributed to all agencies and departments this coming Fall.
- Family Services communicates with Alternative Directions, Inc. on a monthly basis to provide names of inmates from Eastern Correctional Institution who have filed a domestic case with the Clerk of the Court for Somerset County. It provides not only an opportunity for the inmate to receive legal advice but moves the case more expeditiously through the Court system.
- Karen Brimer, the Family Services Coordinator, welcomes all court personnel to visit the Somerset County Courthouse (Built in 1905) in historic Princess Anne, Maryland. Please feel free to stop in if you are on the Lower Shore.

Karen Brimer, Family Support Services Coordinator,
Circuit Court for Somerset County

Making Links between Public and Private Funding

The Women's Center of Southern Maryland was in need of children's play equipment for the waiting areas within not only their own non-profit agency, but also in two of the court locations where they provide services to women. The Women's Center, which provides legal advocacy and representation services to over 800 women annually in St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert counties, was finding that it was difficult to entertain the children while they interviewed their parent. More important, the attorneys providing the services were concerned that the children would be hearing information in the interview that could be damaging.

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During a recent site visit, Debra Bright of the Department of Family Administration referred the Women's

Center to the Roger L. Harrell, Jr. Memorial Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing assistance for children, families and public safety in Maryland. The foundation was founded by Anne and Roger Harrell after the drowning death of their son, Roger, in Ocean City in 1999.

The Roger L. Harrell Foundation supplied a \$1,000 grant to the Women's Center to provide paint, curtains, and play equipment for two children's waiting rooms. The Department of Family Administration thanks the Foundation for partnering with the courts and the Women's Center of Southern Maryland in this effort. With appropriate facilities for children, courts and service providers alike become more accessible—and victims more likely to seek the protection they need.

Innovations mark new juvenile court

Montgomery County Circuit Court Juvenile Division

The transfer of the Montgomery County juvenile court from the District to the Circuit Court has provided that jurisdiction the opportunity to adopt some innovations in juvenile case management.

Centralized Service Center

One innovation in the jurisdiction is a centralized service center. The Montgomery County Government recently consolidated juvenile services in the new Juvenile Assessment Center that opened its doors for business in 2001. The Juvenile Assessment Center houses three predominant organizations that touch the lives of the youth of Montgomery County: the Family Division of the Montgomery County Police Department, the Department of Juvenile Justice and certain offices of the County's Department of Health and Human Services.

Dependency Mediation

In September 2000 the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families brought together representatives of the County Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, private bar, Health and Human Services, Circuit Court Family Division, mental health professionals, District Court Juvenile Judges, and other community support groups. These representatives discussed many aspects of CINA cases and explored possible projects that would improve the quality of service to the families coming before the juvenile justice system. They elected to develop an alternative dispute resolution plan for dependency mediation at the pre-adjudicatory stage of CINA proceedings in the Juvenile Court.

The Collaboration Council has secured funding from the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) and the Governor's Office for Crime Control and Prevention for the start-up phase of the new program. Three stakeholder orientation sessions have been held that included a "mock" mediation presentation. Two four-day training programs (with an additional court observation day) were scheduled; one was held in June and was deemed a success by attendees and presenters; another will be offered in September.

Several cases have already requested this new service even before a site has been secured for the program! The mediation program is slated to be fully functional by Fall 2002 and has been included in the new Juvenile Court Differentiated Case Management Plan. The goal of dependency mediation is to bring together those parties who are influential in the child's life in order that everyone may craft a plan for securing the welfare of the minor and affording a resolution to the conflict before the court.

DCM Plan and Staff Changes

A timely resolution to the conflict before the court has proven beneficial to the children in other jurisdictions nationwide. In order to ensure an appropriate and timely resolution in child welfare cases and delinquency matters, the court has developed the DCM plan for juvenile causes. Court staff now consist of a Juvenile Coordinator and three Case Managers for Juvenile Causes. (These positions reflect the similar structure in the Circuit Court Family Division where there is a Family Div. Coordinator and four Family Division Case Managers.)

The Coordinator will provide oversight of the DCM plan, the Juvenile Case Managers, and develop future plans under the direction of the Circuit Court Administrator and Administrative Judge. It is anticipated that the Coordinator will also work with the Family Div. Coordinator to access appropriate programs and services existing in the Family Division.

The Juvenile Coordinator and Case Managers, in cooperation with the Circuit Court Family Div. staff, will work to access, and where necessary, create new programs recognizing the changing demographics and the ethnic diversity of those individuals and families coming before the courts in Montgomery County.

Elaine Finnin, Family Division Coord.,
Circuit Court for Montgomery County

CINA "snapshots"

The Foster Care Court Improvement Project monitors data in CINA and TPR cases to assist us in evaluating our compliance with statutory case management requirements. For example, CINA cases are to have an adjudication hearing within 30 days of shelter care, and a disposition hearing on the same day, although the disposition hearing can be extended to within no more than 30 days of the adjudication hearing. A final order must be issued in TPR cases within 180 days of filing.

The data provided below represents a “snapshot” of how we are doing in these cases based on the data currently available. These snapshots should assist the AOC and local jurisdictions in spotting trends, good case processing practices, as well as problem areas. The following illustrate two specific categories of CINA and related TPR and Adoption statistics for FY02, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarters (July 1, 2001 through March 31, 2002).

Figure 1. Length of time from shelter care to adjudication hearing (July 01 - March 02)

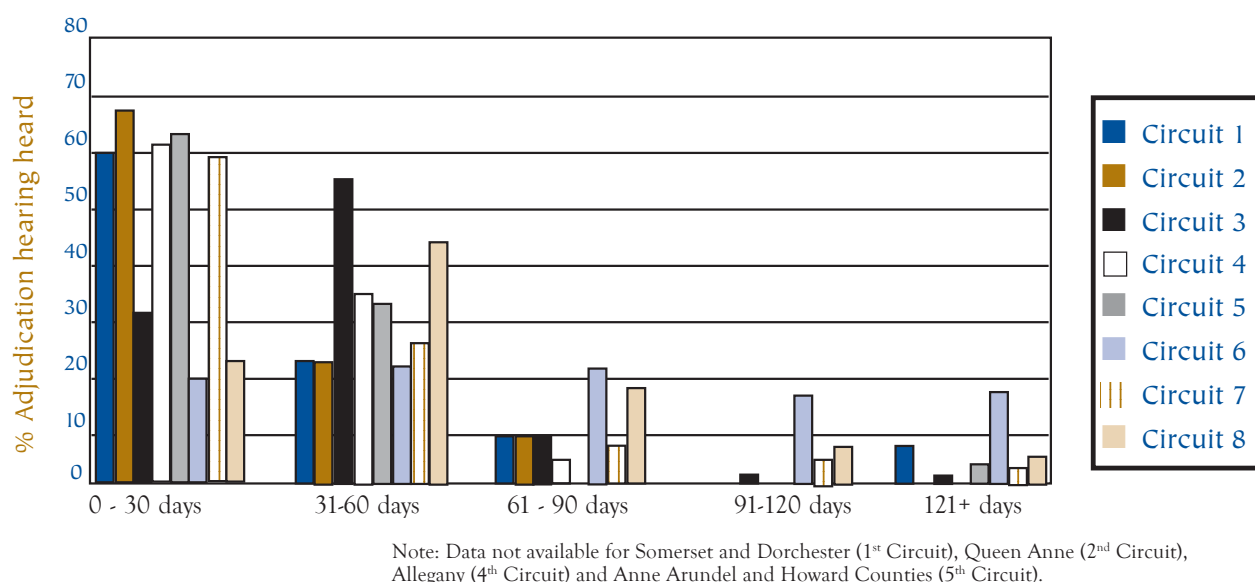
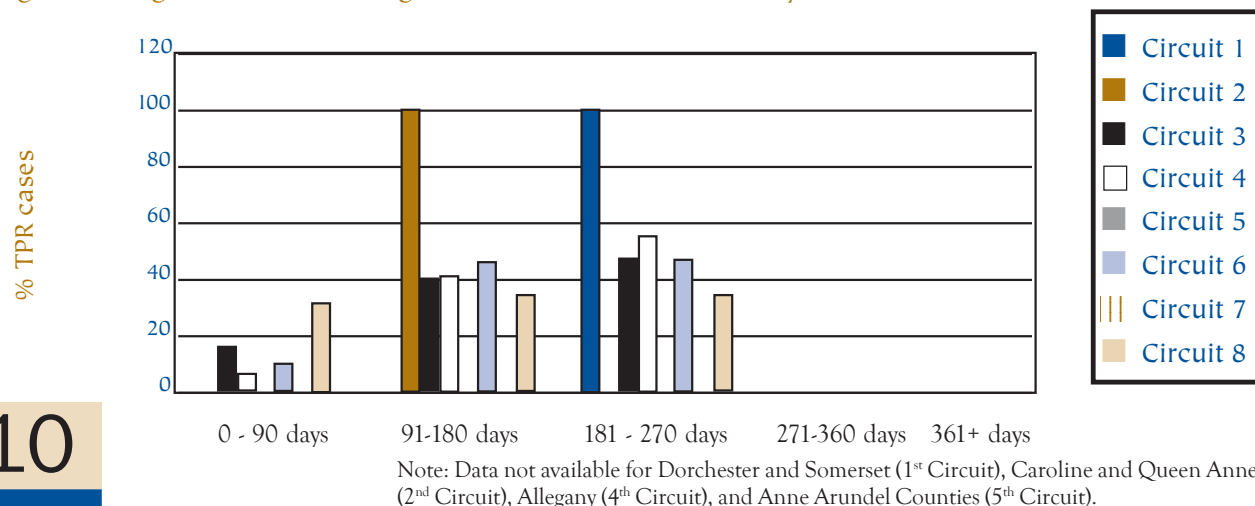


Figure 2. Length of time from filing to final order in TPR cases (July 01 - March 02)





CINA Conference Planning Underway

Preparations for the Fifth Annual Court in Need of Assistance Conference, to be held October 7-8, 2002, are at full speed. This year's conference, hosted in lovely Solomons, Maryland, will feature both local and national experts in the fields of child welfare and the law. This year's keynote speaker will be Maryland's own Hon. David Mitchell, formerly of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. Judge Mitchell is currently the Executive Director of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He will return to Maryland to offer a national perspective on the direction our nation's juvenile courts should take.

The focus of this year's conference is providing judges and masters with the "tools" necessary to render solid decisions in CINA and related cases. The first day, reserved for judges and masters, will highlight the "inner workings" of CINA and TPR cases, as well as ASFA-Specific Findings in Permanency Planning, and the debut of the New Juvenile Rules. The second day, which is open to members of the multiple disciplines serving children in these cases, highlights the long-term effects of the system and the service agency's responsibilities to children in care. This two-day conference is sure to be informative and memorable. Conference participants will enjoy the welcoming ambiance of Fall in Southern Maryland. For more information, please contact Tracy Watkins-Tribbitt at (410)260-1272.

AFCC, cont. from p. 1

family law matters. Professor Janet Heppard of Houston, Texas rounded out the panel, and discussed practice pitfalls and pointers for lawyers working with cases involving a pro se litigant.

Additionally, the Honorable Marcella Holland of Baltimore City and Barbara Babb, Director of the Center for Families, Children and the Courts, University of Baltimore Law School, led a panel entitled "Changing the Face of the Family Court."



Part of the Maryland contingent at the AFCC Conference in Hawaii.

photo by Harry Jordan

The seminar addressed the challenges facing the Family Court of the 21st century including providing user-friendly access, coordinated jurisdiction, effective case management, integrated service delivery and accountability to consumers. The focus of the discussion was how family courts can make incremental changes and sidestep the problems of attempting too much too soon.

General sessions addressed "hot topics" such as resiliency in children of divorce, grandparent visitation post-*Troxell v. Granville*, and what the future holds for families, courts and communities. National and international experts led these interactive sessions, allowing ample time for audience participation. The different disciplines represented on the panels often led to lively and thought-provoking discussion among the panelists and audience. The general session on Friday morning even included a short lesson in the Hawaiian language and hula dance!

Jennifer Cassel, Family Law Admin.,
Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County

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Family Law Committee Update

The Family Law Committee met on May 6. At that meeting, the committee approved a Full Faith and Credit Bench Card developed by the Domestic Violence Subcommittee, as well as reviewed revised ex parte and protective order forms developed by the District Court. The committee discussed the need for a more formalized forms approval process for the Judiciary. The committee also reviewed several proposed Domestic Relations forms changes. Those changes will be submitted to the Conference of Circuit Judges for review at their September meeting.

A summary of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act was distributed. The UCCJEA would replace the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA) currently in effect. A version of the UCCJEA was submitted last legislative session but did not pass. The committee voted to request that the Custody Subcommittee undertake a review of the UCCJEA so that the

Judiciary can prepare an educated position on the bill if it is resubmitted next legislative session.

The Family Law Committee elected not to meet over the Summer and to resume meeting in the Fall with a September planning retreat.

Child Support Subcommittee

The Child Support Subcommittee is continuing to meet throughout the Summer. The Subcommittee is preparing a report for the Family Law Committee that will highlight some child support enforcement practices that have been effective, and areas that require improvement. The report will include recommended legislative changes as well as recommended policies.

Custody Subcommittee

The Custody Subcommittee will be meeting over the Summer to study the UCCJEA and to consider further implementation of a Baltimore City Parenting Plan Pilot Project.

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Custody and Visitation Symposium National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

John Cambardella, Family Services Coordinator for Caroline County's Circuit Court, attended a Custody and Visitation Symposium in Charleston, SC, May 5-8, presented by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Headliners included Dr. Philip Stahl, who presented the in-depth custody evaluation training for many of "our" evaluators two years ago.

Dr. Stahl focused on the Complexities of Alienation and Relocation. Dr. Peter Jaffe, a clinical psychologist from Toronto, addressed the challenges and difficulties accompanying custody cases involving domestic violence. Dr. Michael Lamb,

whose name appears in many footnotes and bibliographies familiar to us, keyed on the developmental needs of children under age five.

The program offered an ideal curriculum for family support services coordinators: effects of domestic violence on children and child development, use of the GAL, use of supervised visitation, services to pro se litigants, involvement of fathers in children's lives, and several other topics relevant to the spectrum of issues raised in custody and visitation cases. A notable quote from the dais — "If you're on a mission of revenge, dig two graves."

John Cambardella, Circuit Court for Caroline County

Judge Friedman's Gift to Families Continues after Her Retirement



Judge Friedman is honored at a recent retirement celebration.

photo by Dana McKee,
Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP

Judge Friedman capped her long career of service to families by donating the proceeds from her retirement reception to the Women's Law Center and the House of Ruth. Approximately 200 people attended the event which was held at Gertrude's at the Baltimore Museum of Art on June 5th. As a result of the event the Women's Law Center and the House of Ruth received gifts of \$1,426 each for a total donation of \$2,852.

The organizations will use the proceeds to enhance the Protective Order Advocacy Representation Projects (POARP) they operate in Baltimore City. The House of Ruth operates the POARP program at the District Court; the Women's Law Center operates a POARP program at the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. The POARP programs provide on-site safety planning, legal advice and representation to victims of domestic violence seeking assistance through the Maryland courts.

Family Law, cont. from previous page

Domestic Violence Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair, Judge Patrice Lewis, presented the revised ex parte and protective order forms to the Conference of Circuit Judges on May 20, 2002. The Conference endorsed the revised forms with one amendment. These forms were revised to permit judges to issue orders which are clear, readable and consistent. The Conference requested that hard copy versions of the forms be made available to circuit court judges who do not have access to the forms on-line in their current form as those were designed to interface with the District Court information system. The Administrative Office of the Courts will make the forms available to circuit court judges.

Juvenile Subcommittee

The Juvenile Subcommittee will resume meeting in the Fall.

family matters

**We welcome your comments and contributions.
Please call or write: Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, Exec. Dir.
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Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) Update

The FCCIP is expanding its staff to include TPR Court Coordinator to spearhead its efforts to more efficiently process TPR cases. See the article on “Statewide TPR Initiatives” on page 1 for further information.

CINA Subcommittee

The CINA Subcommittee disseminated its draft of the TPR statute which has been divided into three sections: DSS-Related TPR and Adoption Proceedings, Private Child Placement Agency Guardianship and TPR Proceedings, and Independent and Private Child Placement Agency Adoption Proceedings. As with the CINA statute, this separation will afford judges, masters, practitioners, and others, the ability to look in one section and chronologically follow the legal process for the type of proceeding in which they are involved. Feedback is currently being sought from the major stakeholders in the child welfare system. A finalized draft is anticipated by the beginning of September and will be forwarded to the Judiciary channels for approval for submission during the 2003 legislative session. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the draft TPR statute, please contact Althea R. Stewart Jones at (410) 260-1296.

Representation Subcommittee

As reported in the last issue of *Family Matters*, the Representation Subcommittee disseminated a brief survey to judges and masters who hear the foster care cases to evaluate whether the *Guidelines of Advocacy for Attorneys Representing Children in CINA and Related TPR and Adoption Cases* have made a difference in the quality of legal representation for children. Unfortunately, the response to the initial survey was minimal. Therefore, the Representation Subcommittee is in the process of contacting those persons who have not responded so that a more representative sample can be tabulated.

The Representation Subcommittee is also reviewing recommendations to enhance the quality of representation for DSS and parent representation.

Statistics Subcommittee

This is a time of great transition. The Statistics Subcommittee is currently monitoring the state-wide rollout of the UCS Juvenile module. In addition, the remaining “Big 3” counties, (Baltimore City, Montgomery, Prince George’s) are currently updating or preparing to transition into more efficient automated information systems. The importance of preserving existing data is being emphasized, as each county embarks upon their transition process. The ongoing conversions are comprehensive and involve detailed testing procedures, resulting in a potential delay in reporting of monthly statistics. Data from July 1, 2001 through March 2002 has been captured in the “snapshot” review featured in “CINA Snapshots,” p. 10.

In an attempt to promote statewide uniformity regarding the reporting of accurate data, the subcommittee has outlined two efforts towards this cause. An ad hoc committee, chaired by the Hon. Dennis McHugh, Circuit Court for Montgomery County, has been developed to compose uniform court orders for the use of those judges and masters who hear CINA and related cases. This work group is composed of other members of the Judiciary as well as practitioners. Upon approval from the Conference of Circuit Judges, these new orders will be presented at the CINA conference.

The other effort includes a statewide training of all juvenile clerks on an overview of the UCS system, review of uniform terminology, reporting requirements, and technical support. This training will be offered on several days in September. Stay tuned for more details.

cont. on next page



Around Maryland

Calvert

Calvert County Circuit Court is hosting a Guardian Ad Litem training on September 19, 2002. The training will be provided by the Children of Separation and Divorce Center at Kings Landing Park Conference Center in Huntingtown. For more information, contact Patricia Veitch at 410-535-1600 x516.

Caroline

The Maryland Legal Assistance Network, along with the Legal Aid Bureau and Caroline County Public Library, have established a People's Law Library Outreach Site at the local library. A computer dedicated solely to this resource has been provided. In addition to the valuable information available, users will be able to print out appropriate forms, access reference materials, self-help books and brochures.

Carroll

Family & Children's Services in Westminster is starting two anger management groups: one for

women and one for men. Participants should be people who have anger problems outside of their mate relationships, i.e., anger at neighbors, employers, friends. No court order is needed. For more information contact Eric Davis at 410-876-1233 x226

Garrett

Garrett County's Family Services Program has recently implemented a supervised visitation program. The program began June 15, 2002 and operates the second and third Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Oakland Town Hall. Funding has also become available to help pay court ordered mediation fees for litigants with limited income! For more information, call Randy Whitaker at 301-334-7602.

Talbot

With help from Caroline County's Program, Talbot County Family Service Program will host a GAL training on November 15, 2002 in Easton. Contact Patt Jordan at 410-822-3718 for more details.



FCCIP, cont. from previous page

The subcommittee remains hopeful that the outlined efforts will yield good solid

data, which will accurately reflect the work of the local jurisdictions.

article in this issue. Also, please note that the FCCIP 2003 Judicial Institute course is now entitled "Aspects of a CINA Case." This interactive course, geared towards judges and masters new to juvenile court, will take participants step by step from shelter care through permanency planning and review hearings. Again, stay tuned for more details as the April 11, 2003 date gets closer.

Training Subcommittee

As reported previously, the Training Subcommittee is planning the 5th Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Judicial Conference which is scheduled for October 7-8, 2002. Please refer to the Conference Highlights

TPR Workgroup

The TPR Workgroup was successful in receiving its budgetary requests to assist in reducing the TPR backlog throughout the State.

Department of Family Administration

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| September 12, 2002 | Coordinator's Planning Retreat, Kent Manor Inn, Stevensville | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| September 14, 2002 | Dedication of Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center | Dale Hendrick, 410-396-8101 |
| September 24, 2002 | Family Law Committee Planning Retreat | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| September 25, 2002 | Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Meeting | Will Howard, 410-260-1298 |
| October 7- 8, 2002 | 5th Annual Child Abuse & Neglect Conference | Althea Stewart Jones, 410-260-1296 |
| October 9-11, 2002 | Maryland Joint Child Support Conference | Kelvin Harris, CSEA, 410-764-2843 |
| October 15, 2002 | Family Div./ Family Serv. Program Annual Reports Due | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| October 21, 2002 | Family Law Committee Meeting | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| October 25, 2002 | Working with High Conflict Families, Harford Comm. College | Ofc. of Family Court Svcs., 410-638-3100 |
| November 12, 2002 | Coordinator's Meeting | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| November 15, 2002 | GAL Training, Upper Eastern Shore | Patricia Jordan, 410-822-3718 |
| November 18, 2002 | Family Law Committee Meeting | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| January 6-10, 2003 | 40-hour Mediation Training | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |
| February 4-6, 2003 | 20-hour Domestic Mediation Training | Pamela Ortiz, 410-260-1580 |